



MEMORANDUM

TO: SMOKE-FREE NOLA
FROM: GLEN BOLGER
RE: NEW ORLEANS SMOKE-FREE LAW: POST-IMPLEMENTATION SURVEY
DATE: OCTOBER 20, 2015

Methodology

Public Opinion Strategies conducted a city-wide survey of 500 registered voters in New Orleans. The survey was conducted by landline and cell phone, using live interviewers, October 5-8, 2015. Thirty-five percent (35%) of interviews were conducted with cell phone respondents. The margin of error for this survey is $\pm 4.38\%$.

Key Findings

1. ***Voters strongly favor the smoke-free ordinance that went into effect in April.***

Our recently completed survey shows that more than three-in-four voters (78%) favor the city law that extended Louisiana's statewide smoke-free law into all workplaces, including bars and casinos. Intensity is very strong as well, with nearly two-thirds (64%) of voters indicating they strongly favor the law. Just 20% oppose the law. In December 2014, before implementation of the law, 66% of voters favored the proposed law, and 32% opposed it. Among key subgroups:

- The law earns robust support across party lines, with 73% of Republicans, 60% of Independents, and 83% of Democrats favoring the law.
- Strong majorities across the five city council districts are in favor: 76% in District A, 74% in District B, 80% in District C, 84% in District D, and 74% in District E.
- Fully 75% of white voters and 80% of African American voters favor the law.
- There is little difference among differing ideological groups, with 78% of conservatives, 81% of moderates, and 76% of liberals in favor of the law.
- Voters of all educational backgrounds favor the smoke-free law: 79% of voters with a high school education or less, 75% of voters with some college experience, 77% of college graduates, and 80% of voters with a graduate or professional degree.

2. ***Overwhelmingly, voters say exposure to second-hand smoke is a health hazard, and they place a high premium on having a smoke-free environment inside all workplaces.***

Eighty-eight percent (88%) of voters say exposure to second-hand smoke is a health hazard, with 70% saying it is a serious health hazard and 18% saying it is a moderate hazard. Just 11% say it is either a minor health hazard or not a hazard at all.

Fully 89% of voters say it is important to them to have a smoke-free environment inside all workplaces, including restaurants, bars, and casinos. Two-thirds of voters (67%) say it is very important to them to have a smoke-free environment inside all workplaces, and 21% indicate that it is somewhat important. Just 11% say it is not very important or not at all important. Among key subgroups:

- There is no difference by party: 83% of Republicans, 82% of Independents, and 91% of Democrats say having a smoke-free environment is important.
- Fully 84% of white voters and 92% of African American voters say a smoke-free environment in all workplaces is important.
- Having a smoke-free environment is important to 84% of men and 93% of women.
- Voters across gender/education lines agree on this measure, with 87% of men without degrees, 81% of men with degrees, 93% of women without degrees, and 93% of women with degrees saying a smoke-free environment in all workplaces is important.

3. ***By a 64 point margin, voters say the rights of customers and employees outweigh the rights of smokers to smoke and owners to allow smoking.***

Eighty percent (80%) say the rights of employees and customers to breathe clean air in restaurants, bars, and casinos are more important than the rights of smokers and owners to allow smokers inside such establishments, while just 16% say the rights of smokers and owners are more important.

4. ***Nearly half of voters in New Orleans say going out to bars and casinos since the law's implementation has made their experience more enjoyable.***

Fully 48% of voters say going out to bars and casinos has been a more enjoyable experience since the law went into effect, with 40% saying it has been much more enjoyable. Only 9% say going out has become less enjoyable, while about one-third (35%) say it has made no difference.

The Bottom Line

Voters in New Orleans strongly favor the city law that extended the statewide smoke-free law to prohibit smoking in all workplaces, including bars and casinos. Importantly, support for the law is stronger now (78% favor/20% oppose) than it was prior to implementation, as measured in our December 2014 survey (66% favor/32% oppose). Moreover, they overwhelmingly feel that exposure to second-hand smoke is a health hazard, and they say that having a smoke-free environment in all workplaces is important to them. Notably, they side with the rights of customers and employees to breathe clean air over the rights of smokers to smoke and owners to allow smoking by a significant margin. Six months after its implementation, it is safe to say that the city-wide ordinance has been welcomed with open arms by the voters of New Orleans.